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Does childhood neglect contribute to violent behavior in adulthood? A review of possible links



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## **ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT**

Does childhood neglect contribute to violent behaviour in adulthood? A review of possible links.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Child neglect, whether intentional or unintentional on the part of caregivers, has serious and far-reaching negative consequences for children. Neglect is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment and has been associated with impaired cognitive development, changes in brain structure and nervous systems, behavioral and personality disorders and poor academic performance. However, the role of child neglect, and subtypes of neglect, in the development of adult violent behavior is not well understood. The "cycle of violence" hypothesis, which predicts that individuals exposed to child physical abuse are more likely to be physically violent in adulthood, is well supported by the literature. However, a growing number of studies suggests that child neglect may be equally predictive, or more predictive, of adult violent behavior than child physical abuse. The present review considers a range of studies that investigate aspects of this relationship, and identifies key patterns and trends that have emerged from these

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